

CALIFORNIA CODES
HEALTH AND **SAFETY CODE**
SECTION 11845.5

11845.5. (a) The identity and records of the identity, diagnosis, prognosis, or treatment of any patient, which identity and records are maintained in connection with the performance of any alcohol and other drug abuse treatment or prevention effort or function conducted, regulated, or directly or indirectly assisted by the department shall, except as provided in subdivision (c), be confidential and be disclosed only for the purposes and under the circumstances expressly authorized under subdivision (b).

(b) The content of any records referred to in subdivision (a) may be disclosed in accordance with the prior written consent of the client with respect to whom the record is maintained, but only to the extent, under the circumstances, and for the purposes as clearly stated in the release of information signed by the client.

(c) Whether or not the client, with respect to whom any given record referred to in subdivision (a) is maintained, gives his or her written consent, the content of the record may be disclosed as follows:

(1) In communications between qualified professional persons employed by the treatment or prevention program in the provision of service.

(2) To qualified medical persons not employed by the treatment program to the extent necessary to meet a bona fide medical emergency.

(3) To qualified personnel for the purpose of conducting scientific research, management audits, financial and compliance audits, or program evaluation, but the personnel may not identify, directly or indirectly, any individual client in any report of the research, audit, or evaluation, or otherwise disclose patient identities in any manner. For purposes of this paragraph, the term "qualified personnel" means persons whose training and experience are appropriate to the nature and level of work in which they are engaged, and who, when working as part of an organization, are performing that work with adequate administrative safeguards against unauthorized disclosures.

(4) If the recipient of services is a minor, ward, or conservatee, and his or her parent, guardian, or conservator designates, in writing, persons to whom his or her identity in records or information may be disclosed, except that nothing in this section shall be construed to compel a physician and surgeon, psychologist, social worker, nurse, attorney, or other professional person to reveal information that has been given to him or her in confidence by members of the client's family.

(5) If authorized by a court of competent jurisdiction granted after application showing probable cause therefor, as provided in subdivision (c) of Section 1524 of the Penal **Code**.

(d) Except as authorized by a court order granted under paragraph (5) of subdivision (c), no record referred to in subdivision (a) may be used to initiate or substantiate any criminal charges against a client or to conduct any investigation of a client.

(e) The prohibitions of this section shall continue to apply to records concerning any individual who has been a client, irrespective of whether he or she ceases to be a client.

